

What is Claimed:

1 1. A method of providing information using an information appliance
2 coupled to a server at a location remote from the information appliance, comprising
3 the steps of:

4 (a) storing text files in a database at the remote location;

5 (b) converting, at the remote location, the text files stored in step (a) into
6 speech files;

7 (c) receiving a request for a portion of the speech files converted in step
8 (b);

9 (d) transmitting to the information appliance the portion of the speech files
10 requested in step (c); and

11 (e) receiving and presenting the speech files transmitted in step (d) through
12 audio speakers.

1 2. The method of claim 1 in which step (e) includes receiving and
2 presenting speech files of one of electronic program guide (EPG) information,
3 weather information and news information.

1 3. The method of claim 1 in which

2 step (a) includes storing EPG text files,

3 step (b) includes converting the EPG text files into EPG speech files,

4 step (c) includes receiving a request for the EPG text files, and

5 step (e) includes reformatting the EPG text files into a page of text and
6 presenting the page of text on a television monitor; and

7 the method including the following additional steps:

8 (f) receiving an indication of a location on the page of text; and

9 (g) transmitting, from the remote location to the information appliance, a
10 portion of the EPG speech files corresponding to the received location indication.

1 4. The method of claim 3 in which the page of text includes at least one
2 date, multiple channels, multiple times and at least one legend inserted in a grid; and

3 step (f) includes receiving an indication of a location in the grid; and

4 step (g) includes first transmitting speech files of the at least one date, multiple
5 channels and multiple times and then separately transmitting speech files of the legend
6 in the grid location indicated in step (f).

1 5. The method of claim 1 in which step (b) includes converting the text
2 files into speech files using a first text-to-speech (TTS) synthesizer and a second TTS
3 synthesizer, whereby the first TTS synthesizer and the second TTS synthesizer use
4 different languages.

1 6. The method of claim 1 in which step (b) includes receiving a selection of
2 one of multiple voice personalities, and converting the text files into speech files using
3 the selected voice personality.

1 7. The method of claim 1 in which step (e) includes storing received
2 speech files in a memory device of the information appliance, and

3 extracting from the memory and presenting portions of the received speech
4 files in response to the received request.

1 8. The method of claim 1 in which step (e) includes buffering received
2 speech files in a buffer of the information appliance, and presenting the buffered
3 speech files through the audio speakers.

1 9. The method of claim 1 including

2 (f) presenting set-up configurations sequentially through the audio speaker;

3 (g) pausing the audio presented in step (f) between each set-up
4 configuration; and

5 (h) waiting a predetermined time period during each pause to receive an
6 input command.

1 10. The method of claim 1 in which step (d) includes transmitting to the
2 information appliance the portion of speech files at a periodic interval of time, and

3 step (e) includes storing the transmitted portion of speech files in a memory
4 device of the information appliance.

1 11. A method of providing electronic program guide (EPG) information
2 using a communications network, comprising the steps of:

3 (a) storing EPG text data in a server;

4 (b) converting the EPG text data into EPG audio data;

5 (c) transmitting the EPG audio data and the EPG text data through the
6 network;

7 (d) receiving from the network, by a set top box (STB), at least the EPG
8 audio data;

9 (e) processing the EPG audio data in the STB; and

10 (f) sequentially presenting the EPG audio data through an audio speaker.

1 12. The method of claim 11 in which step (d) includes receiving the EPG
2 audio data at periodic time intervals.

1 13. The method of claim 11 in which step (f) includes presenting the EPG
2 audio data by announcing at least a channel, a time, and a legend corresponding to the
3 channel and time;

4 pausing the announcement through the audio speakers; and

5 presenting by announcing at least another channel, time, and legend
6 immediately after pausing the announcement.

1 14. The method of claim 11 in which step (f) includes presenting the EPG
2 audio data by announcing at least a channel; and the method including the following
3 additional step:

4 (g) selecting the channel for one of listening and viewing.

1 15. An audio enabled data service system, including an information
2 appliance comprising:

3 a memory device;

4 a modem adapted to connect to a network;

5 a processor coupled to the modem for (a) communicating on the network, (b)
6 receiving speech files from the network, and (c) storing the speech files in the
7 memory device;

8 a receiver for accepting input commands from a remote control;

9 an audio speaker; and

10 the processor responsive to the input commands accepted by the receiver for
11 (a) extracting a portion of the speech files stored in the memory device and (b)
12 sending the extracted portion of the speech files to the audio speaker.

1 16. The audio enabled data service system of claim 15 including
2 a server coupled to the network;

3 wherein the server includes a storage device for storing electronic program
4 guide (EPG) text files, a text-to-speech (TTS) synthesizer for converting the EPG text
5 files into EPG speech files, and a transmitter for transmitting the EPG text files and
6 the EPG speech files onto the network; and

7 the speech files received by the processor include the EPG speech files.

1 17. The audio enabled data service system of claim 16 including a television
2 monitor, and a receiver for receiving an input command;

3 wherein the processor receives the EPG speech files and the EPG text files
4 from the network;

5 the processor formats the EPG text files into a page of text; and the processor
6 provides the page for display on the television monitor;

7 the receiver receiving an input command which provides an identifier for
8 identifying a location on the page displayed on the television monitor; and

9 the processor, in response to the identifier, extracts a portion of the EPG
10 speech files corresponding to the identified location on the page, and sends the
11 corresponding portion of EPG speech to the audio speaker.

1 18. The audio enabled data service system of claim 17 wherein the page
2 includes at least one date, multiple channels, multiple times, and at least one legend
3 inserted in a grid;

4 the identifier identifies the grid on the page; and

5 the portion of EPG speech extracted by the processor includes the legend
6 inserted in the grid.

1 19. The audio enabled data service system of claim 18 wherein the
2 processor receives the EPG speech files in response to a download request from the
3 server; and

4 the download request includes a first download request for the at least one date,
5 multiple channels and multiple times, and a second download request for the legend
6 inserted in the grid.

1 20. The audio enabled data service system of claim 16 wherein the TTS
2 synthesizer includes a synthesizer using one of a first language and a second
3 language, whereby the first language is different from the second language.

1 21. The audio enabled data service system of claim 16 wherein the TTS
2 synthesizer includes multiple voice personalities for converting the EPG text files into
3 EPG speech files; and

4 the TTS synthesizer selects one of the multiple voice personalities, in response
5 to an input command from the remote control.